author's comment

SHOUOTO AYA

When the title for "S.L.H" was decided upon, I have a feeling someone was up to something "Stray Love Hearts!" came first, you see. So later on when I realized that "SLH" could be taken as shorthand for the title of "Sylph" magazine, I was pretty surprised. Sure, it was a coincidence, but it was still a freaky one.

カバーデザイン 清水杏苗（CoCo Design）

S.L.H
ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!
5
硝音あや
S-1-5
シルフコミックス

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学園と共にS.S寮の地下にある謎の地下遺跡に迷い込んでしまった主人公・ひよきは、暗闇の中で、歩見の能力が以前よりも確実に強まってきていることを自覚する。そして、最後のS寮生だったはずの李遥は、夢の中でひよきの心臓を奪った人物ではなかったことが判明。戸惑いを隠せないひよきの前に、寮監の恋雪が「本当の最後の部屋」を指し示す。そこに待ったのは予想外の人物だった――。隠された過去と激動の運命が交錯するなか、ついにすべての真実が明らかに。感動の学園ファンタジックストーリー、完結!

CAIN & HIYOKI

N
S
R
E

SLH
ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!

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Stray Love Hearts
STL
ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!
5
SHOUOTO AYA
硝音あや

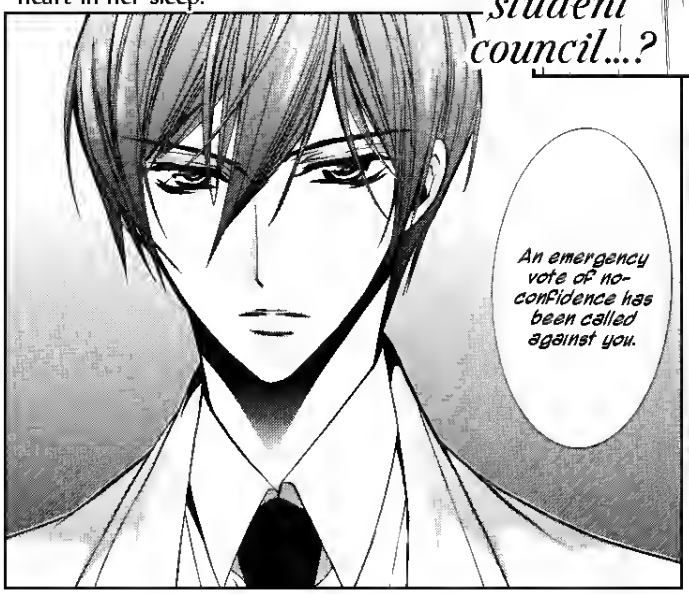
STORY

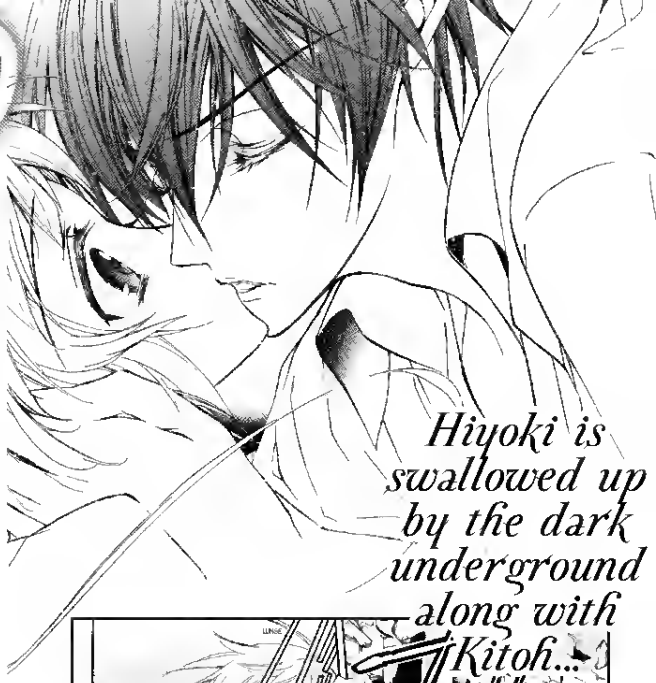
Hiyoki, the heroine of our story, has been clandestinely peeking into the dreams of the boys of S-Hall for some time now in order to find clues as to the whereabouts of her heart, which was stolen from her in a dream. But before she can make much more progress, she and the other members of S-Hall find themselves shipwrecked on a southern island only to discover that this island isn't so deserted -- it's student council president Cain's private property! Hiyoki is scared and bewildered enough when she finds her dream-seeing powers are suddenly intensifying, when Cain confesses to her, "When I'm with you, the nightmares disappear," and kisses her. With Cain's objectives and true designs yet a mystery to her, this leaves Hiyoki deeply disturbed...

Hiyoki Kozue
梢ひよき

A sixteen-year-old girl with the ability to see inside dreams. She's been looking for the man who stole her heart in her sleep.

And what sinister plot spirals around the student council...?

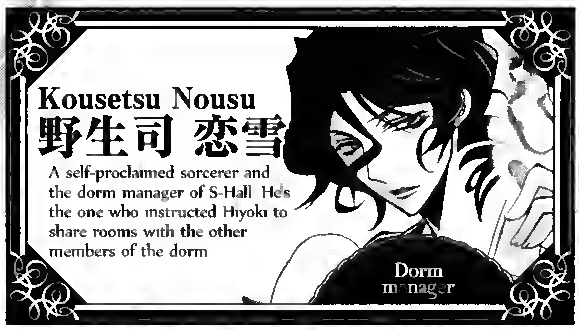




Hiyoki is swallowed up by the dark underground along with Kitoh...

Summer vacation draws to a close, and Hiyoki moves on to share a room with the final member of S-Hall she has yet to sleep with: Kitoh. Only Kitoh's been keeping a secret... In his room, a secret stairway leads down to an ancient ruin beneath the dorm. Given this startling revelation, Hiyoki begins to suspect Kitoh may be the man who stole her heart, but in the same way, she discovers that Kitoh had also suspected her of knowing the secrets held by the ruins. Just as it seemed the bad blood between the two had been cleared up, the walls of the ruins crumble down around them, and the two plunge into the dark underground... Meanwhile, Cain is facing troubles of his own, as an emergency vote of no confidence is ordered against him.

S寮
寮生紹介
S Dormitory Member Introduction



Kousetsu Nousu
野生司 恋雪

A self-proclaimed sorcerer and the dorm manager of S-Hall. He's the one who instructed Hiyoki to share rooms with the other members of the dorm

Dorm manager

Kitoh Ninomiya
二宮季遠

A super celebrity and a hit with the ladies. the former president of the student council has the last room Hiyoki has yet to sleep in

Third-year

Minemitsu Yamashina
山科峯満

A calm, cool and collected student with a vast array of knowledge. And he happens to be especially severe when it comes to money!?

Second-year

Ren Ichikawa
壱河 漣

A fellow first-year and secretly Cain's half brother. His recent conduct seems to suggest he's made up his mind with a terrible decision

First-year

Hijiri Asukai
飛鳥井聖

Kitoh's childhood friend. Incidentally he's a bit of a girly-man who has a deep seated love for all things cute

Third-year

Miki Uegaito
上垣内実喜

A naive airhead with mean athletic skills! Known more commonly as "Gai-sempai"

Second-year

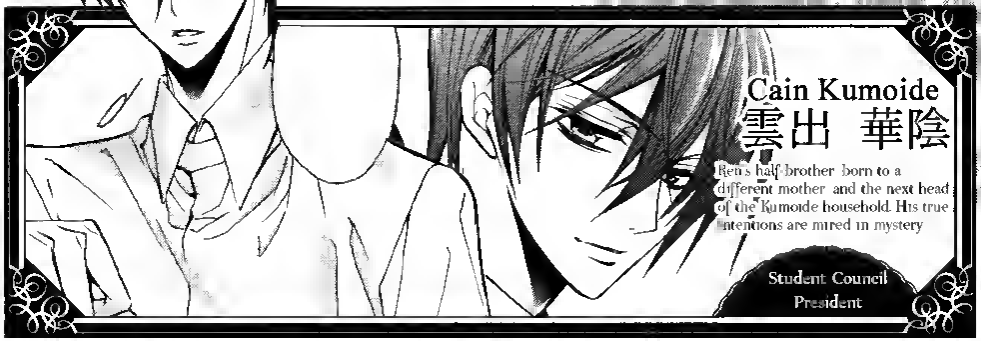
Kuga Reizei
冷泉久我

Another first year. His flowery manner of speech frequently throws Hiyoki for a loop

First-year

生徒会紹介

Student Council Introduction



Cain Kumoide
雲出 華陰

Ren's half-brother born to a different mother and the next head of the Kumoide household. His true intentions are mired in mystery.

Student Council President

Stella Toyonoka
豊香 ステラ

A "princess" with a nearly idol-like status within the school. She's infatuated with Cain.

Secretary

Shizuka Uryuu
雨柳 静

Cain's right-hand man in business as well as personal matters. He seems to have ulterior motives.

Vice President

Ayuma Hidaka
日高 鮎真

An idol active in the entertainment biz, and a popular figure within the school, to boot. No one knows how to rile a crowd up like he does!

Secretary

Minemitsu Yamashina
山科 岑満

His computer skills and number-crunching abilities are beyond compare. He resides in S-Hall.

Treasurer

ドラマティック40P

SLL ストレイ・ラブ・レッスン

SHOOOTO AYA
硝音あや

NOT ONLY DELIGHTFUL, BUT PAINFUL——MARVELOUS SPRING HAS COME.
咲き誇れ美しく
MY ONE AND ONLY BEAUTIFUL PETSPHONE,
オレだけの春の女神(セフィネ)
BLOOM, IN ALL YOUR RESPLENDANT GLORY...
激動のドラマティック学園ロマン
S・L・H
Stray Love Hearts
ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!
room #17
硝音あや
SHOUONE AYA
ドラマCD
『S・L・H ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!』
第1巻
大好評発売中!
『S・L・H ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!』1～3
複製原画応募者
全員サービス
最新刊の収録原画から
全4種類を複製原画にして
応募者全員にサービス!
詳しくはP.60を
CHECK!
最新刊発売中!
『S・L・H ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!』4

※定価・価格は税込(5%)です。

Stray Love Hearts!

...Oh, good.
You're finally awake...
PHEW
I...I'm sorry!!
I knew I should've gone on a diet..!
BRRP
...Wah.
So close...
Aww.
You could've stayed in my lap a little while longer.
BLUSH
Not that again!!
You were really out of it for a while there.
SPLOOSH
OH...

HE'S SOAKED TO THE BONE...
HE KEPT ME ON HIS LAP THIS WHOLE TIME TO KEEP ME FROM GETTING WET...
But you're not hurt, right?
You seem okay... That's good to know.
Yes...
I'm fine.
Is there anybody out there?
Maybe someone will hear us if we call for help.
You think maybe it's already daylight outside?
I don't think we'll be able to climb up *there* without some help, though...
Hellooo
It's a long way back to the top...
Considering someone would have to find the staircase in my room to begin with, then somehow connect the dots from there to here...
We might be looking at a pretty drawn-out affair. I don't exactly get as many visitors as you might think...
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING...

Well, this sucks...
SHIVER
...
Are you cold?
To be honest... Freezing.
I know it probably sounds stupid, but I've gotten so tired,
I don't even have the energy to move.
It's not stupid at all...
Are you sure you're okay?
SPLASH
Hiyoki-chan...
HE'S SO COLD...
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP...?

WHATEVER I DO, I HAVE TO MAKE SURE HIS BODY TEMPERATURE DOESN'T GO ANY LOWER THAN IT ALREADY HAS... AND I THINK I KNOW HOW...
Well...
You can use me as a heating pad, or something like that... It'll help!
SQUEEZE
I'm alright with it if you are.
...Er.
...So warm...
SLIP
...
Alright... Sorry. Is it okay if I hold on to you?
A... Abso-lutely!

Eh...?
It's kind of... strange...
hearing that from you, Kitoh-sempai...
Is it...?
Well, sure. I mean, you're usually so good around girls...
I kind of figured you were experienced with... you know... intimate details.
Romance, huh...
...Actually, I.. I don't think I can do this... It's making me edgy.
OH, I HOPE KITOH-SEMPAI DOESN'T START THINKING I'M SOME KIND OF PERVERT BECAUSE OF THIS!
NOW MY FAKE HEART'S REALLY GOING CRAZY.
B-bump
B-bump

Sure, I like girls, but that's because they're nice.
I don't think I'd call it something like "love"...
...
Wha ...?
Knocked me down a few pegs in your eyes, huh?
Er, no. It's just...
I GUESS I'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT LOVE IS, MYSELF.
Then again, that's the way it always is with me...
I don't care... I can't care, not about anything.
I'm a slacker,
and I'm irresponsible...
That's what Asuka's so pissed off at me about right now.

Asuka-sempai...
He's been looking for you, you know. Something to do with your career counseling form.
...yeah, well...
Asuka likes to go around saying I can do whatever I wanted to, as long as I put my mind to it...
...but that's just not me.
IT'S NOT THAT THERE'S ANYTHING I WANT TO DO.
I just don't have anything in me...
I'M A COWARD.
"MORATORIUM..."
A COWARD WHO'S SCARED STIFF BY THE THOUGHT THAT THINGS AROUND ME WILL CHANGE SOMEDAY.
NOW THAT'S A FANCY WAY TO PUT IT.

Hah...
I can't believe I'm telling you all this...
Wobble
HIS DREAM...
Now I KNOW... Something's wrong with me...
Kitoh-sempai, no...! Stay with me!
HIS BODY TEMP KEEPS GETTING LOWER AND LOWER...
Don't go to sleep...!
SQUEEZE
HE'S LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS...
Kitoh-sempai, please... Tell me more about yourself.
THAT BLACK DREAM'S FLOWING OUT OF HIM AGAIN!

Mm...
My parents... wanted me to go to school in England... But I turned them down... Because I wanted to come here, with Asuka...
Okay...
My parents... They're suckers for appearances, so I ran for Student Council President... And that kept them quiet for a while, I guess...
Ha-ha...
Keep going...
I tried to make... the best of it... As much as I could...
But even when I ended up getting the position yanked out from under me by Kumoide, an underclass-man... I just didn't care...
Heck, maybe I was even a little... relieved...
...
But that's the way I am...
Even Asuka's fed up with my attitude... You've seen how cold he is to me lately, right?

A... Asukai-sempai's not...
NO...
Well...
I CAN'T. IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO TELL HIM ABOUT THE THINGS ASUKAI-SEMPAI AND I DISCUSSED IN HIS ROOM OR HIS SECRETS...
I'm sure... That's not the way he really feels...
ONE LITTLE MISUNDER-STANDING, AND THIS IS WHAT IT'S COME TO...
MY CHEST HURTS...
That's why I decided to go study abroad.
So I could put some distance between him... and me...
because I know I'll let him down eventually... It's just a matter of time. I can't live up to his expectations.

Kitoh-sem-pai!!
Ah.
slip
Yeah,
I JUST CAN'T FIND THE RIGHT WORDS.
wish I could say the same..
Wake up...!
FWOOSH
Please, wake up!!
AM I GOING TO GET SUCKED INTO HIS DREAM...!?
AND HIS DREAM'S COMPLETELY EMPTY, TOO.
No...
No!
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN...
MY VOICE ALONE ISN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO REACH HIM...
Sem-pai!
Wake up...

HIS DREAM MAY BE SO DARK THAT I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING INSIDE OF IT,
BUT THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING THERE JUST BENEATH THE SURFACE...
SOMETHING HE "WISHES" FOR, IF ONLY IN HIS DREAMS.
I've never given up just because of a little emptiness, and I'm not starting now.
I DON'T KNOW WHY I HAVE THIS ABILITY TO SEE INSIDE OTHER PEOPLES DREAMS,
BUT I DO KNOW THE PERSON HERE WITH ME NOW NEEDS MY HELP.
SO PLEASE, SOMEWAY, SOMEHOW,
LET ME REACH INSIDE HIS DREAMS.

PLEASE
Kitoh...
WHO'S THERE ...?
Don't give up now,
WAVER
Kitoh.
IT'S A PERSON ...

Asuka...
BRING OUR HEARTS TOGETHER

Kitoh-sempai!
Oh, good... You're finally awake.
SIGH
...
What was that?
FOR JUST A MOMENT THERE,
I THINK I WAS/FINALLY ABLE TO MAKE IT/INSIDE THE DEEPEST PART OF KITOH-SEMPAI'S DREAM...
CAN YOU HEAR ME!?
HEY!!
Hiyoki-chan...

WHAT!?
You dug that up while you were REMODEL-ING!?

SMACK
SMACK
It's alright, sempai! I'm Fine!
She could have gotten hurt down there!!
What are you, STUPID!? How could you take Hiyoki-chan to a place like that!?

Are you guys alright!?
GUYS...

Are you sure...?
sniff
Blanket attack!
I'll warm you up!!
POFF!
You still feel a little cold to me...
O...
Oh. I do?
Heee!

Wait...
How did you guys know where we were, anyway?

I had a dream...
Ehr...
ASUKAI-SEMPAI?
...where you were calling out to me, Hiyoki...
Ditto!
Huh? You did, too?
But...

In my dream... Kitoh was the one calling for me...
...He was?
HOLD ON. MAYBE THAT MEANS...
WE WERE ALL BROUGHT TOGETHER
THROUGH KITOH-SEMPAI'S DREAM?
...Guess that just goes to show...
there are still some unsolved mysteries left in the world.
Right, Hiyoki-chan?
HUH?
Maybe she has some kind of super powers...
"Telepathy" is starting to sound like a pretty good bet to me.
CHUCKLE

B-but?
Hiyoki doesn't need those sorts of powers...
...because anything she could wish for would resonate more strongly with me than any star.
ER... DON'T BE SILLY...
Thank you, Kuga-kun and your amazing powers of persuasion!
Huh...? Ah.. thanks ...
A'yep.
Everybody around here loves you, Hiyoki-chan!
Hey, hold on! Kitoh's the one who showed up in my dream! What's that supposed to say about me!?

Snicker
You know...
I'm starting to think that maybe now's not the best time for me to study abroad....
Not with all the "interesting" things I have yet to discover around here.
KITOH-SEMPAI
!!!
WAIT. WAIT.
WHAT'S ALL THIS TALK ABOUT GOING ABROAD?
Asuka...

Oh, spare me the theatrics, you big baby.
You're just sulking 'cause you haven't figured out what to write on your career form yet.
...Here's a better idea!
POINT-BLANK
Huh...? Wait, that's it? THAT'S your comeback?
You're something else, Asuka...
CELLAR, RUINS; WHATEVER THE HELL IT IS, IT'S STILL A PART OF THE DORM!!
WHY DON'T YOU GO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT WALL YOU BUSTED, HUH!?
...Yeah.
I'm gonna go get changed.
FLOP
CREAK
BUT NOW...
MAYBE THIS WILL NARROW THAT GAP BETWEEN THEM A LITTLE BIT.
GOOD...
Have you ever considered a career in masonry?
Hmm

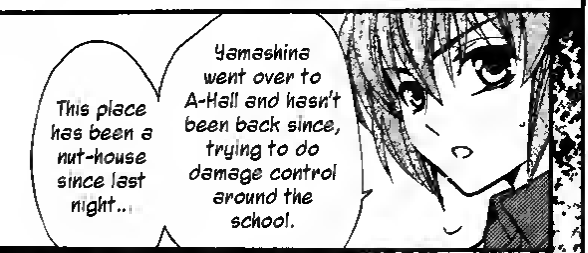
10 SHUT
WITH THIS, I'VE SPENT THE NIGHT INSIDE EVERY ROOM...
AND SEEN INSIDE THE DREAMS OF EVERYONE HERE IN S-HALL...
So much...
For the "last" room...
SINCE I WASN'T ABLE TO SEE THE PERSON I WAS LOOKING FOR,
THE MAN WITH THE PLATINUM HAIR AND THE TATTOO ON HIS CHEST INSIDE ANYONE'S DREAMS...
DOES THIS MEAN MY REAL HEART IS GONE FOR GOOD?
Oh no...
The "last" room, did you say?
SHFF...
GASP

Oh no, no; you seem to be mistaken.
KOUSETSU-SAN..!?
I think you'll find the LAST room all the way over there..
Eh ...?
THERE WAS A ROOM OVER THERE...?
Go on.
Take a look inside your "door of fortune."

CREAK—
FORTUNE...
FATE...
BEYOND THIS DOOR...
LIES THE HONEST-TO-GOODNESS LAST ROOM.

Hello...
Roommate.
I WONDER WHEN IT ALL BEGAN.

Come to think of it,
Were you three the only ones who saw that weird dream?
I noticed Yamashina and Ichikawa weren't with you.
Yeah, well...


Yamashina went over to A-Hall and hasn't been back since, trying to do damage control around the school.
This place has been a nut-house since last night...

Ever since that motion of no-confidence was proposed...
against President Kumoide Cain.

THE DOOR'S ALWAYS BEEN IN PLAIN SIGHT,
YET SOMEHOW, AT SOME POINT, I'D TRICKED MYSELF INTO PRETENDING NOT TO SEE IT.

...Huh?
THE Kumoide Cain?
One and the same...
NBC ran this exposé on the website...
The headline was, "Student Council President found engaged in steamy extracurricular activities on school grounds!" or some crap like that.
SEXUAL REL
So while there was this school-wide internet debate raging about the veracity of the article,
somehow it started feeling like everyone was calling him out on his qualification to stay in office...
I mean, sure the faculty doesn't frown on male-female relations around here or anything like that,
but it's kind of a different matter when they do it on school grounds...
And that the offender is the president of the student council himself... Hell, that's making a bad thing even worse.
Though come to think of it, You were kind of in the gray zone during your tenure too, weren't you?
Hrm...
HA HA HA. ☆
That aside, why would they jump right to taking an emergency vote without doing some kind of inquiry first?
Something's not adding up here...
.....

...I think...
there might be more to this than it seems.
In the event that a vote of no-confidence is proposed to be held against the serving student body president,
his status is revoked for exactly one week until the date of his hearing,
and during that time, he is prohibited access to A-Hall, the dorm reserved for exclusive use by the student council.
And so here I am, back in the room I was originally assigned.
Originally ...?

When I first enrolled here, the dorm I was assigned to...
was S-Hall.
"FORTUNA"... THE MASSIVE COMPUTER WHICH GOVERNS EVERYTHING INSIDE THE SCHOOL...
—But.
That's what "Fortuna" decided for me, anyway.
If there's any sort of significance behind it, I don't know what it is.
All I knew at the time was that something about it didn't sit right with me.
The name had something to do with it, but that was just a part of the bigger problem.
ITS NAME MEANS... "FATE."
Why?

Because from the moment I enrolled in this school, you and I were set up as room-mates.
ST. NAZARE
IDNo : 00000
Room No.7
Cain Kumoide
Hiyoki Kozue
But at the time...
First, there was the fact that it was co-ed
...We WHAT!?
HE'S RIGHT. I DIDN'T TRANSFER HERE UNTIL THE SCHOOL YEAR HAD ALREADY STARTED.
How's that for weird?
You hadn't even enrolled in this school yet.
...Oh!

Now I get it...
That's why you said what you did the first time we met...
"There's something disturbing about you..!"
IT'S ALL COMING TOGETHER!...
So you carried me here...
And how you knew I wanted to go to S-hall...

S... So the whole reason you wanted to destroy S-Hall...
was because you didn't want to be my roommate!?
...
Hey...!
...
YOU WERE HEAVY.
I WASN'T REMEMBERING THAT...!!
I wish it were that simple...
No... Maybe it is that simple...
I...
B-bing

I thought that for me, "living" meant constantly fighting against "fate."
SLAM
SO ALL I DID WAS FIGHT...

I WAS FIGHTING WHEN I RAN FOR STUDENT COUNCIL.
JUST SO I COULD TRANSFER INTO A-HALL.
But...
WOBBLE
Wah.
Eh-

"Cain... You don't honestly think you can outrun 'Fate', do you?"
BUT NOW... HERE I STAND AGAIN.
...HEH.
...HEH-HEH.... HA HA HA...
HOW I WANTED TO RUN...

CAIN... "KUN," MAYBE?
Are you tired? You're wobbling on your feet.

Cain... Are you okay?

...Yeah

REACH
THIS...
IS THE VERY LAST ROOM.
You're all that's left to me now.

NOW THE QUESTION IS...
Hiyoki.
WHO REALLY STOLE MY HEART?

S.L.H - Stray Love Hearts! Vol. 5, ch. 17

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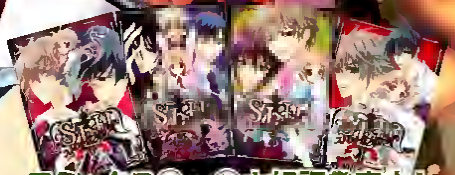
硝音あや
SHOUONE AYA

Stray Love Hearts
S・L・H
ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!

room #18



コミックス①～④大好評発売中!
『S・L・H ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!』
定価:各509円 ※定価は税込(5%)です。

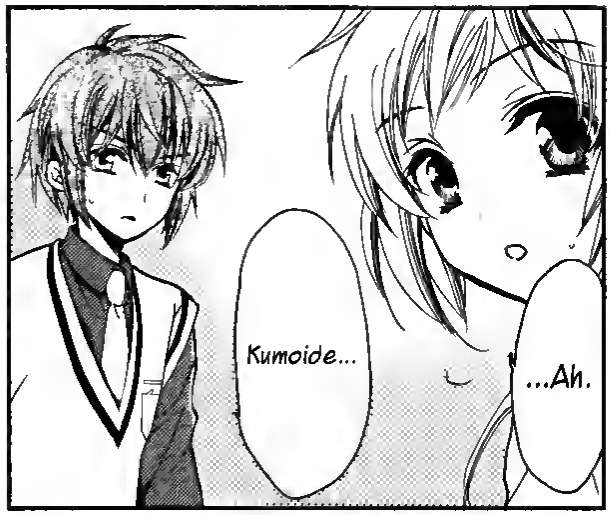
Stray Love Hearts!

AND THEN,
I FINALLY OPENED THE DOOR TO THE LAST ROOM.
...you can't be serious...
AND IT WAS PROPOSED THAT A MOTION OF NO-CONFIDENCE BE BROUGHT AGAINST HIM.
AN ARTICLE WAS UPLOADED TO THE SCHOOL'S SERVERS WHICH ALLEGED THAT THE STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT, KUMOIDE CAIN, WAS UNDER SUSPICION FOR ENGAGING IN ILLICIT SEXUAL ACTIVITY ON SCHOOL GROUNDS.
THAT NIGHT,
THE REST OF THE SCHOOL HAD BEEN PRACTICALLY TURNED ON ITS HEAD.
WHILE I WAS TRAPPED INSIDE THE MYSTERIOUS UNDERGROUND RUINS WITH KITOH-SEMPAI,
NBC

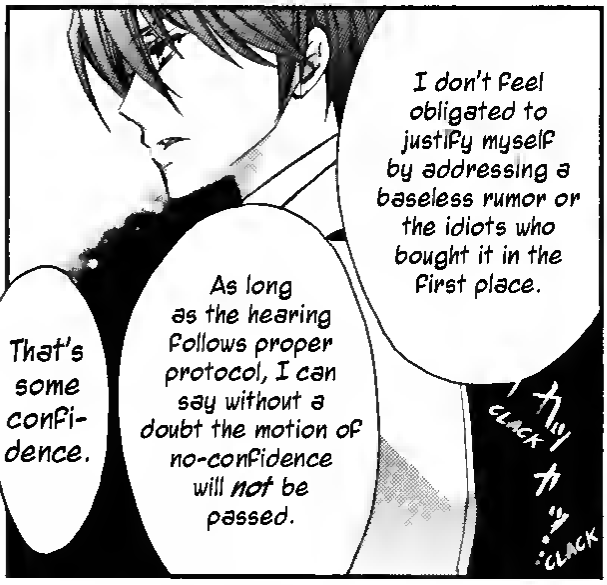
Not ONLY is Kumoide Cain a member of S-hall —
he's Hiyoki-chan's ROOMMATE, too?!

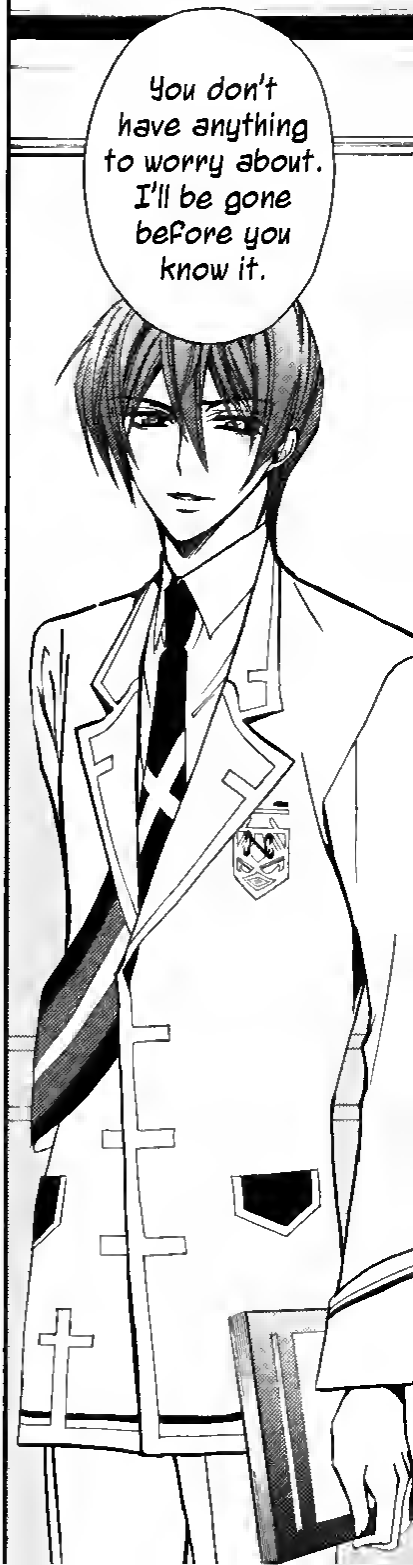
Well...
That's... what it looks like.
I DON'T BLAME THEM FOR BEING SUR-PRISED...
Let's all take a deep breath, shall we?
Now, now, making a fuss about it now's not going to change anything. This is how it should have been from the very beginning.

I'm sure that article was just a bunch of idle gossip, if that's what you're worried about.
...Ah.
Maybe so, but the part about him at least HOLDING a girl was true.
I don't think Hiyoki-chan is safe with that guy!
Th-that was... Well... Um...
NOW MIGHT NOT BE THE BEST TIME TO TELL HIM THE GIRL IN THE PICTURE WAS ME...
I'm sure it's all just a huge misunderstanding....
Besides,
considering the trouble we've had with this guy in the past,
Isn't it a little unreasonable to expect us to get along with Kumoide just because-
Clack
COME TO THINK OF IT, WHERE'S REN...?
Actually-


Kumoide...
...Ah.

...Could that be your way of saying that article about you was just a bunch of garbage?


I don't feel obligated to justify myself by addressing a baseless rumor or the idiots who bought it in the first place.
As long as the hearing follows proper protocol, I can say without a doubt the motion of no-confidence will *not* be passed.
That's some confi-dence.
CLACK
CLACK


You don't have anything to worry about. I'll be gone before you know it.

Let's go, Hiyoki.
Eh...
...Ah?
It's good to see you've got some spunk left in you, though. Speaking as your "predecessor," if nothing else.
chuckle
...Hiyoki...

...Reizei... Kuga.
...Really, now...
SNEER
And the guy who hasn't even managed to figure out what's going on inside his OWN head thinks he can stand up to me?
...Hiyoki is not an object...
Huh?
EH——?
...What is that supposed to mean?
You tell me...

I'm going back to our room. I'll see you later, Hiyoki.
CAIN
?
There's no reason you should have to share a room with that tyrant.
He's right, Hiyoki-chan!
Hey, let's not get ahead of ourselves here. She only just started staying at my place, remember?
As long as she's with me, eventually he'll...
Absolutely not.
KOUSETSU-SAN
?
—Isn't that right, Hiyoki-chan?
The arrangement was for her to stay inside each and EVERY room, no exceptions.

...KH!
SLAM
FLOP
THE LAST ROOM
WHAT'S GOING THROUGH YOUR HEAD RIGHT NOW?
THE PERSON WHO STOLE MY HEART...
IS IT REALLY YOU?

"His physical body and the way he appears inside dreams may not necessarily be one and the same!"
MAYBE ALL OF THIS WILL FINALLY START MAKING SENSE ONCE I LOOK INSIDE CAIN'S DREAMS...
AND HE CERTAINLY DIDN'T HAVE THE PLATINUM HAIR THEN OR NOW.
WAIT... THE ONE TIME I HAPPENED TO SEE HIM NAKED,
THE TATTOO WASN'T ANYWHERE ON HIS BODY,
B-BUMP
B-BUMP

AND THEN WILL I UNDERSTAND WHY I HAVE THIS PAIN IN MY CHEST, TOO—?
...Come here,
Hiyoki.
UP
Shut

THAT SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY WORD THAT COMES OUT OF MY MOUTH LATELY.
Why ...?
CLACK CLACK
...I'm not REALLY going to do anything to you.
CHUCKLE
Whenever you're around,
I can sleep.
That's all there is to it.
IS IT, REALLY?

WHY DOES HE LOOK SO SAD AS HE SLEEPS?
THIS ISN'T RIGHT.
THEY ALL BELONG TO THE MAN WHO STOLE MY HEART.
THE TATTOO...
THE PLATINUM HAIR...
I SHOULD NOT BE DOING THIS.
I ONLY WONDERED, THAT'S ALL...

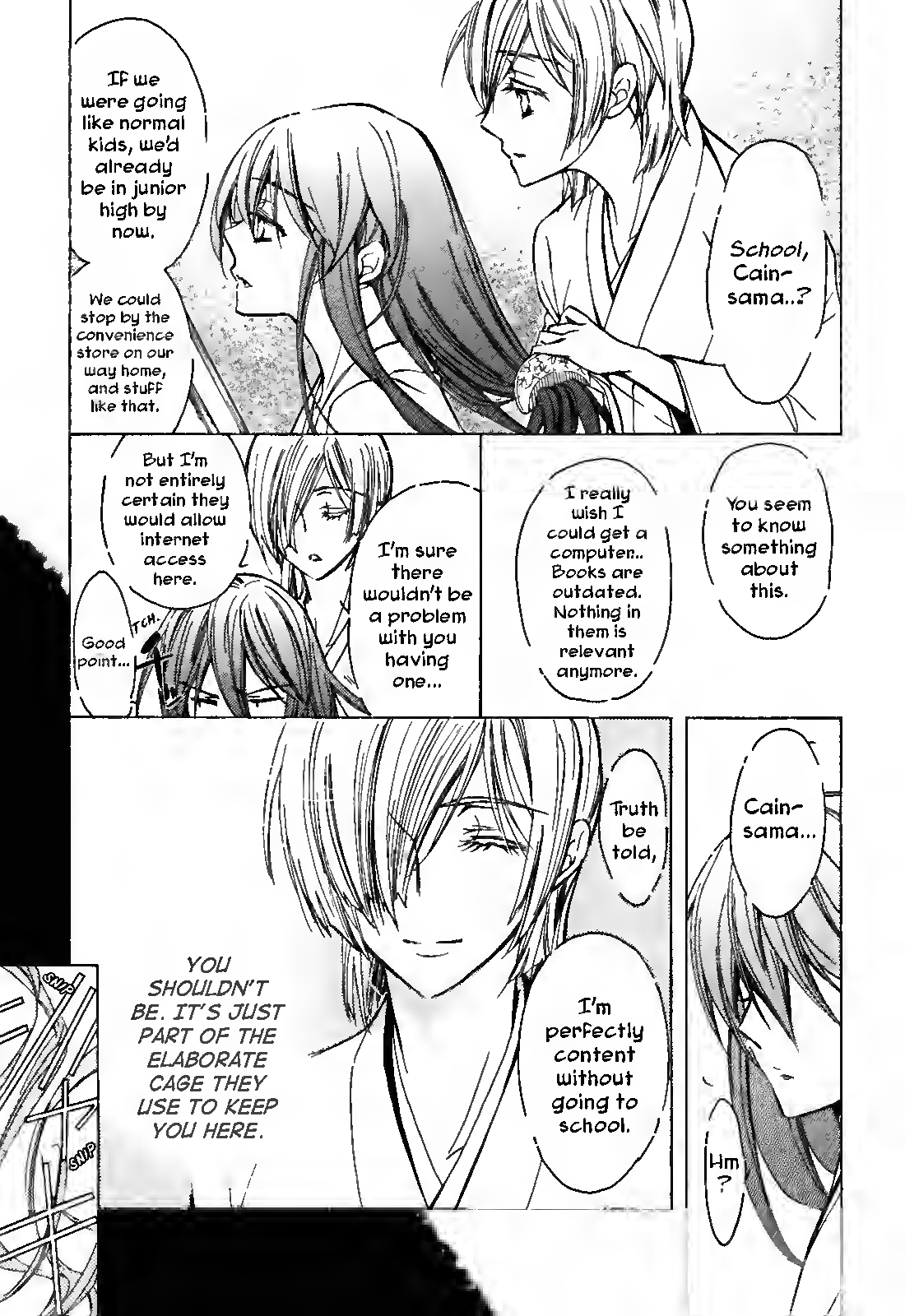
CHERRY BLOSSOMS . . . . .
THERE'S SO MUCH PLANT LIFE EVERY-WHERE...
A MAN-SION ...?
I CAN HEAR THE SOUND OF BELLS RINGING . . .
DING
I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU, CAIN
AND WHAT HAPPENED NEXT IN THAT DREAM

Oh, Cain...
You had another scary dream, didn't you?
There's a good boy...
You've finally learned to "see"...
AAAH!!

NOW YOU SEE THE SAME THINGS MOMMY CAN...
WAS IT WRONG FOR ME TO LOOK?
I was so afraid it was too early to show you the ceremony...
But I'm glad... I'm so glad the power's manifested itself within you...
So, so glad...

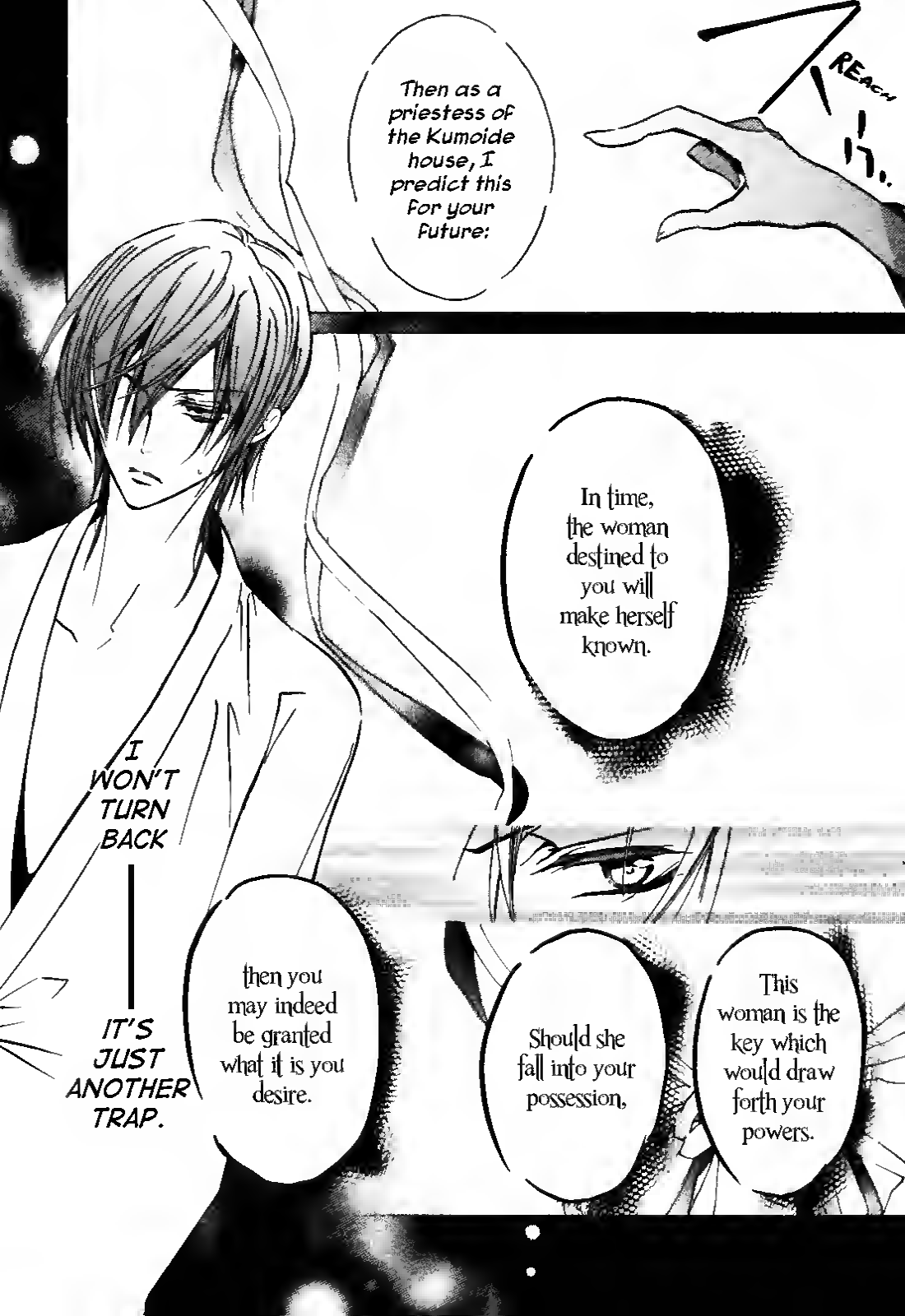
I'M SO GLAD IT WASN'T PASSED ON TO THAT CONCUBINE'S SON INSTEAD...!
GAHAHAHA
REN...!
Cain-sama...
I've been sent from the branch house to serve as your confidante and see to any needs you may have.
My name is Shizuka.
You mean you're here to keep an eye on me, right?

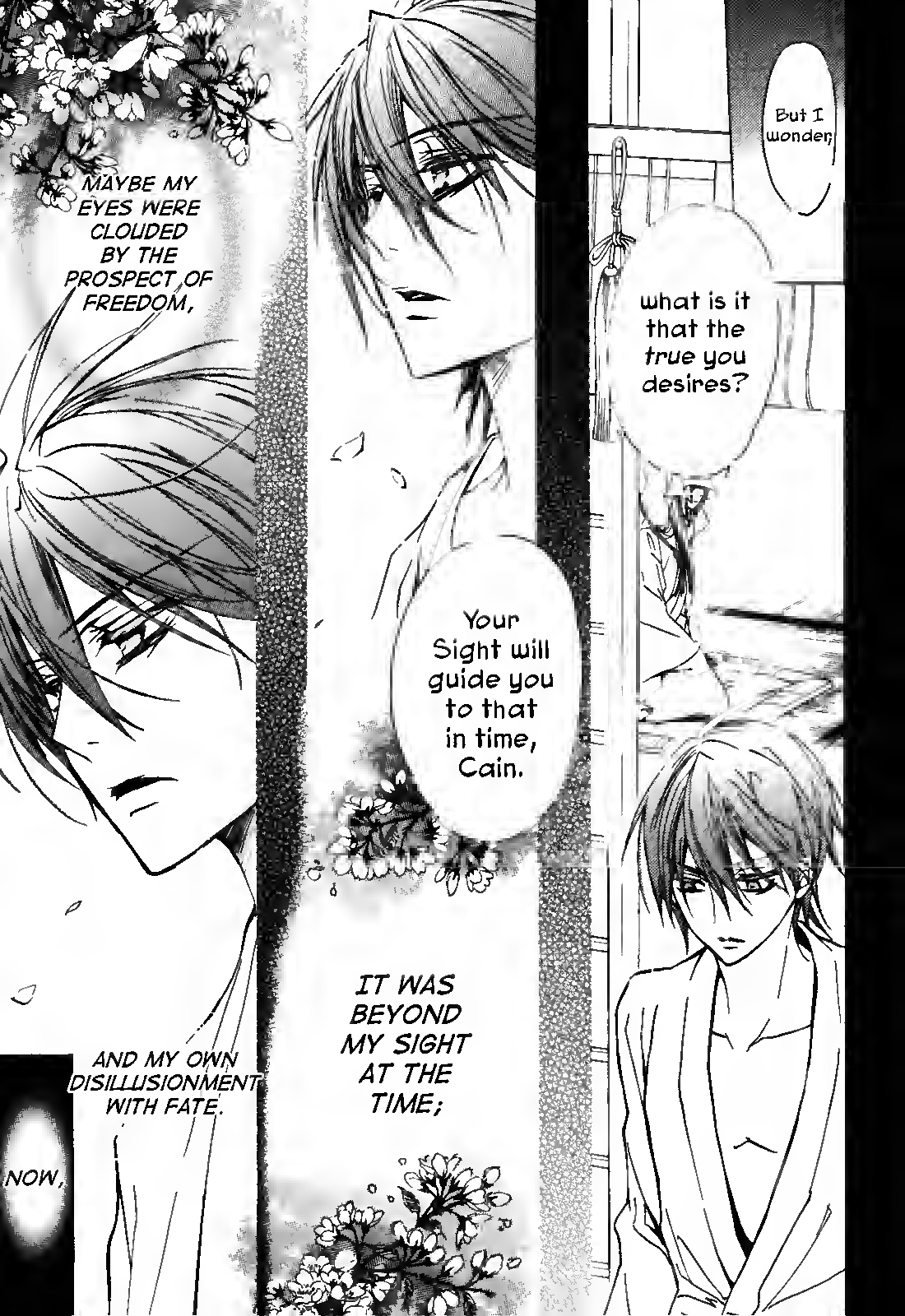
.....
...So you've already *seen?*
No.
You just weren't *smiling.*
I feel bad for you, you know...
Why might that be, Cain-sama?
You aren't allowed to attend school because you have to be with me, right?


If we were going like normal kids, we'd already be in junior high by now.
We could stop by the convenience store on our way home, and stuff like that.
School, Cain-sama..?
But I'm not entirely certain they would allow internet access here.
I'm sure there wouldn't be a problem with you having one...
Good point...
Itch
I really wish I could get a computer.. Books are outdated. Nothing in them is relevant anymore.
You seem to know something about this.
Truth be told,
I'm perfectly content without going to school.
YOU SHOULDN'T BE. IT'S JUST PART OF THE ELABORATE CAGE THEY USE TO KEEP YOU HERE.
Cain-sama...
Hm?
Strip
Strip

THESE TRADITIONS...
His hair..! Oh, merciful heavens, the Sight! It's g-
CALM YOURSELF!
The hair is merely decorative.
YOUR BLIND FAITH,
Cain-sama.
CAIN-SAMA!
SNIP
THIS LONG HAIR...
SNIP
Cain...
Do you believe you can live outside the walls of this house?
AND MY OWN FEARS.
I'm leaving.

When that time comes, do you honestly believe you can survive anywhere but here?
I warn you,
I think I've gleaned more than enough knowledge of the real world from them to help me get by.
A little late for you to be saying that after all those years of making me look into the "dreams" of nothing but common trash!
someday your powers will strengthen beyond the reaches of your control.
THE BLOOD OF THE KUMOIDE FAMILY CANNOT BE ESCAPED.
IT'S A PRISON.
Naturally.
Slide...
...So be it.


Then as a priestess of the Kumoide house, I predict this for your future:
REACH
In time, the woman destined to you will make herself known.
This woman is the key which would draw forth your powers.
Should she fall into your possession,
then you may indeed be granted what it is you desire.
I WON'T TURN BACK
IT'S JUST ANOTHER TRAP.

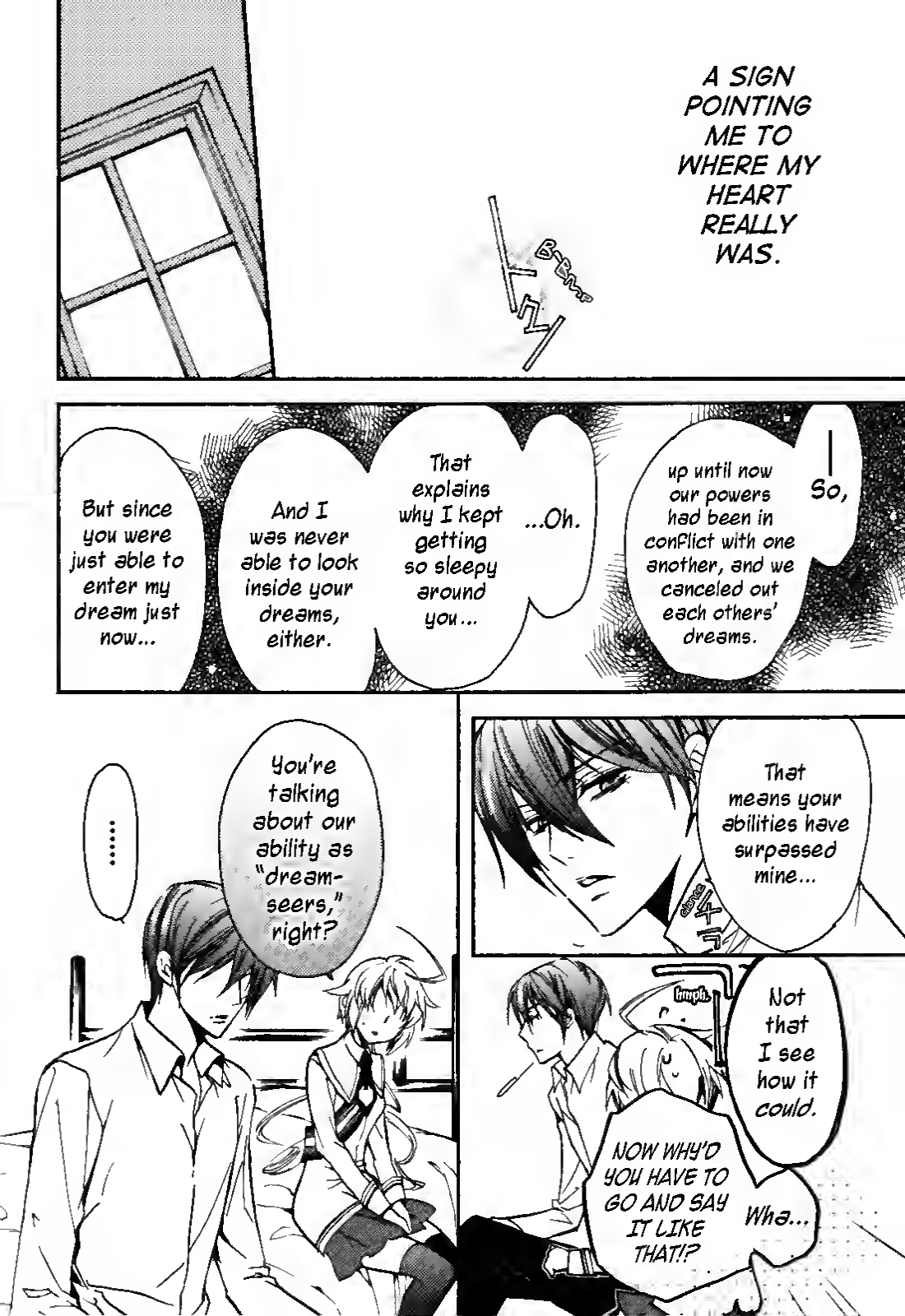

But I wonder,
what is it that the true you desires?
Your Sight will guide you to that in time, Cain.
IT WAS BEYOND MY SIGHT AT THE TIME;
MAYBE MY EYES WERE CLOUDED BY THE PROSPECT OF FREEDOM,
AND MY OWN DISILLUSIONMENT WITH FATE.
NOW,

...I know that form...
I SEE MYSELF ONLY AS THE INCARNATION OF DESPAIR.

Why are you...?
...!?
All this time... it was you?
Hiyoki... You're inside my dream...?
I WAS JUST AS SURPRISED TO SEE HIM STANDING THERE AS HE WAS TO SEE ME.
HE DOESN'T HAVE THE TATTOO, THOUGH... BUT THAT'S THE ONLY DIFFERENCE.

GASP
NOW I KNOW...
...I knew it.
You have the same powers as me.
I KNOW YOUR SECRET.
...Hey.

Why are you crying?
It's nothing. I'm sorr— I just...
THERE REALLY WASN'T ANY REASON FOR ME TO CRY BACK THEN.
BUT LOOKING BACK ON IT NOW,
I can't stand that.
Your heart... is the only one I can't under-stand...
IT WAS A SIGN.


A SIGN POINTING ME TO WHERE MY HEART REALLY WAS.
B-bump
So, up until now our powers had been in conflict with one another, and we canceled out each others' dreams.
...Oh.
That explains why I kept getting so sleepy around you...
And I was never able to look inside your dreams, either.
But since you were just able to enter my dream just now...
That means your abilities have surpassed mine...
Not that I see how it could.
Wha...
NOW WHY'D YOU HAVE TO GO AND SAY IT LIKE THAT!?
You're talking about our ability as "dream-seers," right?
.....

"Dream-seers"...
Maybe there was a time when people knew us by that name...
I can say, at least, that the unique power held by the Kumoide family- the practice of divination...
...to delve into a person's consciousness or unconsciousness.
can be used on people while they sleep...
If the combination of a person's conscious and unconscious mind...
is what a normal person might know as "dreams,"
then a person's "dreams" are the manifestation of everything inside their hearts and mind.
THEIR SECRETS, THEIR DARKNESS, THEIR MEMORIES;
IT'S ALL JUMBLED TOGETHER IN A PREGNANT MESS OF CHAOS.
And now I...

Shizuka...
Cain-sama.
but their thoughts, as well as their futures; am I correct?
—You are now able to perceive not only a person's mind...
CLACK

HE CAN SEE INTO THEIR MINDS...
AND FUTURES ...?
JUMP
Cain-sama, please! Allow me to return you to the Kumoide family house...
...before your powers tear you apart from the inside out!
GET TO THE POINT!
Indeed,
it's a power most befitting the head of the Kumoide household—!!

THESE THOUGHTS
THEY COME AT YOU IN A RELENTLESS TIDE,
THIS MALICE
The scorn, the disappointment.
The doubts and misgivings swirling about you within the school...
You've Seen, haven't you?
So...
surely now you finally despair of how fragile the human mind really is.
Cain-sama,
.....
I only did what was right for you.
Aren't you, Shizuka?
You're the one who proposed the motion of no-confidence against me.

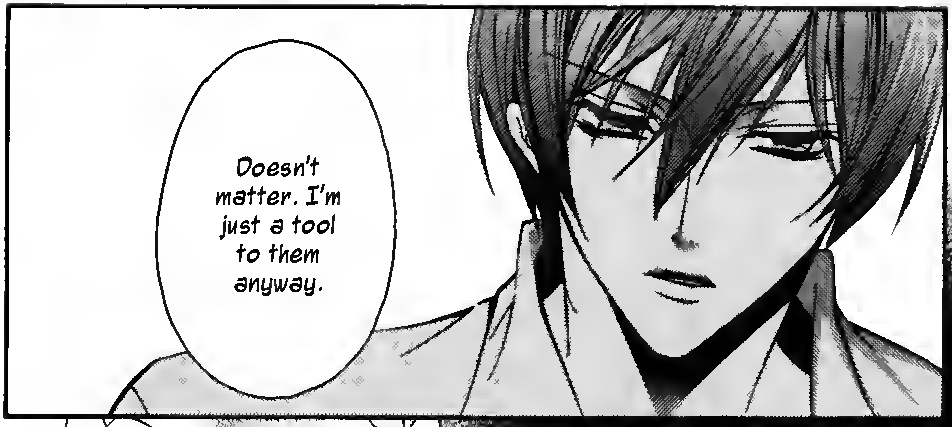
Rustle...
But in the end...
Even with your "fated one" at your side,
Once the student body votes you out of office,
it is my hope that you will finally abandon this crass outer-world...
THE PERSON BEHIND IT ALL... WAS SHIZUKA-SAN...?
Shi-zuka-sa
you cannot escape your fate.
WAIT A MINUTE...
"FATE"?

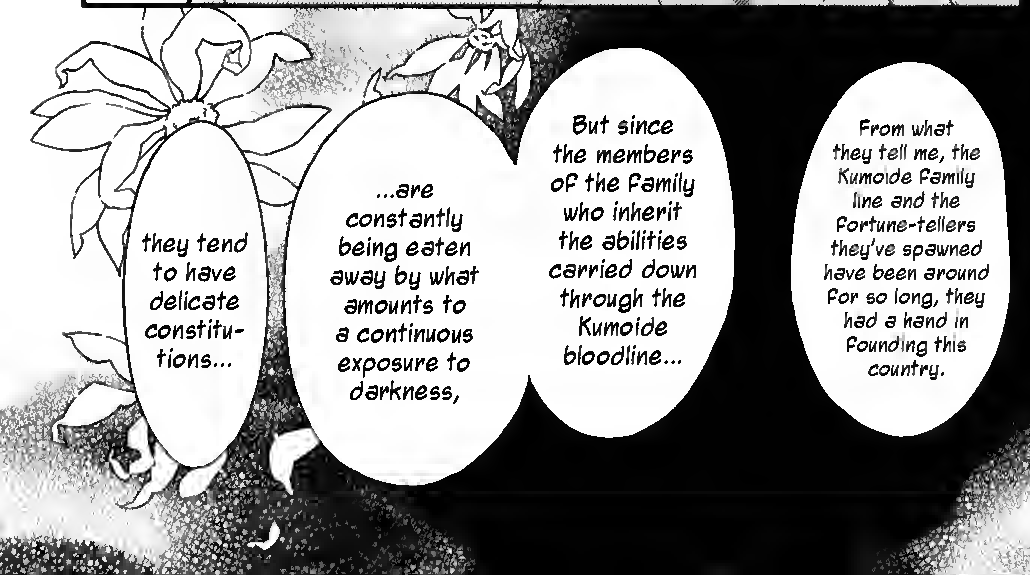
MAYBE...
THE PERSON THAT PRIESTESS PROPHESIED ABOUT IN CAIN'S DREAM WAS...
"The woman destined to you will make herself known."
OH.
Is that "destined woman" supposed to be me!?
Wah!
...Huh?
Please... tell me you didn't just figure that out.
That you and I...
Er...
I sure did!
Just now!

OH... NOW I'VE MADE HIM MAD...
!!
.....
...Tch.
HUH?
Um, sorry I didn't figure it out sooner...
Forget it! Don't apologize!
It's my own fault for being so self-absorbed about the whole thing...
HE'S EMBARRASSED?

THAT'S... ACTUALLY KIND OF CUTE.
It's all just for show, though.
Both in and around the school.
Looks like the Kumoide Family's sent an army of suits out to get me...

Assuming I vacate the presidency and become just another student,
they might shove some story down my throat,
or they might sneak in at night and do it then,
but they'll drag me back home one way or another, and they won't leave until they've got their hands around my throat.
But that's so violent...


Doesn't matter. I'm just a tool to them anyway.


From what they tell me, the Kumoide family line and the fortune-tellers they've spawned have been around for so long, they had a hand in founding this country.
But since the members of the family who inherit the abilities carried down through the Kumoide bloodline...
...are constantly being eaten away by what amounts to a continuous exposure to darkness,
they tend to have delicate constitutions...

When they told me the deal about having a "woman destined for me,"
I kind of figured they were telling me to go off and find a WIFE to bring back home, or something.
A WIFE !?

So...

But knowing you have the Sight just like me, and can cancel out mine on top of that...
...Maybe she was right. You really are my "key."

Hiyoki,
you're my trump card.

SIGH...
HE TALKS ABOUT ME...
...AS THOUGH I'M SOME KIND OF POSSESSION.
HE...HE'S HORRIBLE.

YET FOR SOME REASON, I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO LEAVE HIM.
I WONDER WHY?
THE DAY OF THE HEARING
SOMEONE'S BEEN TAILING ME... ONE OF THE FAMILY'S SUITS?
SHIFF
CLACK
CLACK

TOPPLE
Grab
HE'S USING
...MGH!
ONE OF THE KUMOIDES' OLD CONCOCTIONS ON ME...
FLOP

Let me ask you this nicely, big brother...
PLEASE, JUST GO AWAY...
REN

S.L.H - Stray Love Hearts! Vol. 5, ch. 18

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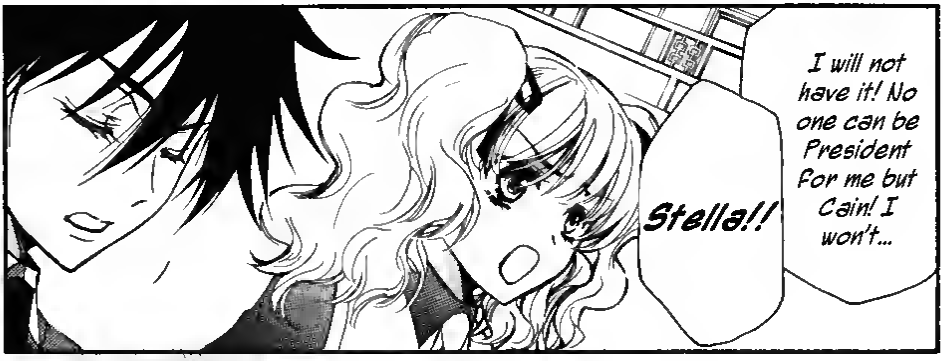
...What's the matter? Couldn't sleep?
room #19
Just running through a simulation of today's hearing.
I've gotten enough, thanks.
Those books look... kind of difficult.
Yeah. But I enjoy them.
Books tend to have just the right amount of stuff inside them. Not too much, and not too little...
Unlike people.
...You're starting to sound like you don't like people at all...
Yeah, well, what about you?

A person's mind is a dangerous thing.
When you talk to other people,
the fact that you can see inside their dreams isn't exactly a topic you want to bring to the table, is it?

Stray Love Hearts
S.L.H
ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!
room#19
THE SITE OF THE HEARING

chatter
chatter
chatter
Kumoide Cain isn't here?
...What?
No...
And now it's long past the time the scheduled start time,
but without the president here...
The rest of the student council is over on the stage discussing how to proceed with the hearing right now.
clack
clack
.....

It is not fair to Cain to not let him speak!!
TRÈS MAL!
Stella-san, please. Be rational...
SHIZUKA-SAN!
With so many people present, putting off the hearing any longer is simply out of the question.
We'll give him thirty more minutes. If the president doesn't show by then,
we'll put the motion of no-confidence to vote without hearing his testimony.


Stella!!
I will not have it! No one can be President for me but Cain! I won't...

You'll only embarrass the President if you cause a scene.
All we can do for him now is support him the best way we know how.
Clop
...Hmh.
STELLA-SAN...

Did you hear that? They said the president isn't coming... Do you think he...?
Maybe he couldn't come up with a good excuse?
Oh no...
I'll bet he ran...
Think he just up and quit school?
Maybe. He's got the pride for it...
WHAT? OH NO, PRESIDENT...
MURMUR
MURMUR
Hiyoki-san.
Was the president acting unusually at all this morning?
Yamashina-sempai...
No... Well... Not for him at least, I don't think...
"A person's mind is a dangerous thing..."

BUT...
Either way, I know he's not the kind of person who wouldn't show up at all.
GRAB
Hiyoki-san, I won't ask how you would know that sort of thing right this very instant...
But if you have any idea where the president might be, then please find him and bring him back just as soon as you can!
Y... Yes?
Hiyoki-san...
MAYBE HE'S NOT FEELING WELL...
Maybe...
Hiyoki-san!!

I'd like to request the same of you as well, Hiyoki-san.
I think I speak for everyone here when I say...
...the president is not the sort of man to take the easy way out.
CAIN
!!
WHERE AM...?
...Ugh!
SPIN
...Damn. Awake already?
Guess these drugs don't do jack to you, huh...

REN...?

Morning, bro.
Damn shame you couldn't stay out of it a little longer. How rich would it have been if you'd waken up to find out you'd slept through the entire hearing?
Shizuka put you up to this, didn't he?
.....
"Uryuu Shizuka"?
What, your lackey?
Maybe he did, and maybe he didn't.
I don't know and, frankly, I don't give a damn.
...Ren...
LOOK, HERE'S THE DEAL.

THE ONLY REASON I CAME TO THIS SCHOOL
WAS SO I COULD SET YOU UP AND COMPLETELY RUIN YOU.
HERE, AT ST. NAZARETH—
What are you talking about?
.....
SHUWIP
I was invited here by some guy who's been getting in touch with me through messages he puts in paper cranes.
WHOEVER IT WAS, HE TOOK CARE OF ALL THE COSTS I NEEDED TO GET INTO THIS OH-SO-PRESTIGIOUS SCHOOL AND EVEN HANDLED THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS HIMSELF.
And if I wanted to screw you over just like I planned,
then I had to follow every directive he gave me, no questions asked. That was our agreement.

But if it gave me a chance for my revenge, then I swore I'd do whatever it took.
That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard...
Yeah. It's stupid, alright.
The only thing I need to do for this plan to work is keep you in here for the duration of the hearing...
And when you don't show up to make your case, the rest of the school's gonna rip your presidency out from underneath you.
REVENGE...
OH. SO SHE'S...

EEK!
Rustle
HIIII-YOOO-KI-CHAN!!
HE'S NOT IN OUR ROOM...
HE'S NOT IN ANY OF THE CLASSROOMS, EITHER.
WHERE COULD HE BE...?
Jump
Gai-sem-pai!!
WHAT'SA-MATTER? YOU LOOK AWFUL BOTHERED ABOUT SOMETHING.
I'm trying to find President Kumoide...
Well.. Actually...
THE PREZ, HUH? WELL, CAN'T SAY I KNOW WHERE HE IS...
I didn't think so...
BUT!
I DID SEE REN-KUN WALKING THAT-A-WAY WITH A REAL FUNNY LOOK ON HIS FACE.
REN-KUN...?

BUT OVER THERE
Oh...
THAT'S THE SECRET UNDER-GROUND CELLAR...
REN-KUN TOLD KUGA-KUN ABOUT...
So I hear you're sticking to your guns about going to school even though the family's against it, huh?
I think now would be a good time to call it quits, "little master."
You just don't get it, do you...
Sniff
How am I supposed to if I can't tell what you're thinking from one minute to the next!?
Of course I don't get it!!
GRR

YANK
I spent the better part of my childhood stuck in some manky-ass corner of the world-famous Kumoide house while all the rest of the family saw fit to do was talk trash about me and my mom behind our backs!
WE WERE JUST THE "WHORE," AND HER "WHORE-SON!"
And then you show up out of nowhere and pretended we were FAMILY, you slimy bastard.
But you couldn't just leave it at that, could you?
You had us in the palm of your hand, and you dumped us on our asses just like that!
My mother practically KILLED herself living in the Kumoide mansion...
And she never bounced back.
SHE DIED THREE YEARS AGO BECAUSE OF THAT PLACE...!
Stop it...!

creak...
You shouldn't be fighting like this... You're brothers!
REN-KUN
SO THAT'S WHAT IT WAS
Hiyoki...
How did you...?
Ren-kun, listen...
CLENCH
I HAVE TO.
...You're not going to...?

BECAUSE THIS...
IS ALL I CAN DO FOR THEM...
HEAR ME, "DREAMS" SLEEPING WITHIN THESE TWO.
shine
PLEASE.

CONNECT BOTH THEIR HEARTS...
AND THEIR PAIN... TOGETHER, AS ONE...
What's the matter, Ren?
.....
Y'know Cain
I was thinkin' about how he hasn't been coming around lately
Nothin. It's just
Training?
I hear he's undertaking training to be the master of the house
He hasn't, has he.
.....
...Ren.
Yeah, Mom?

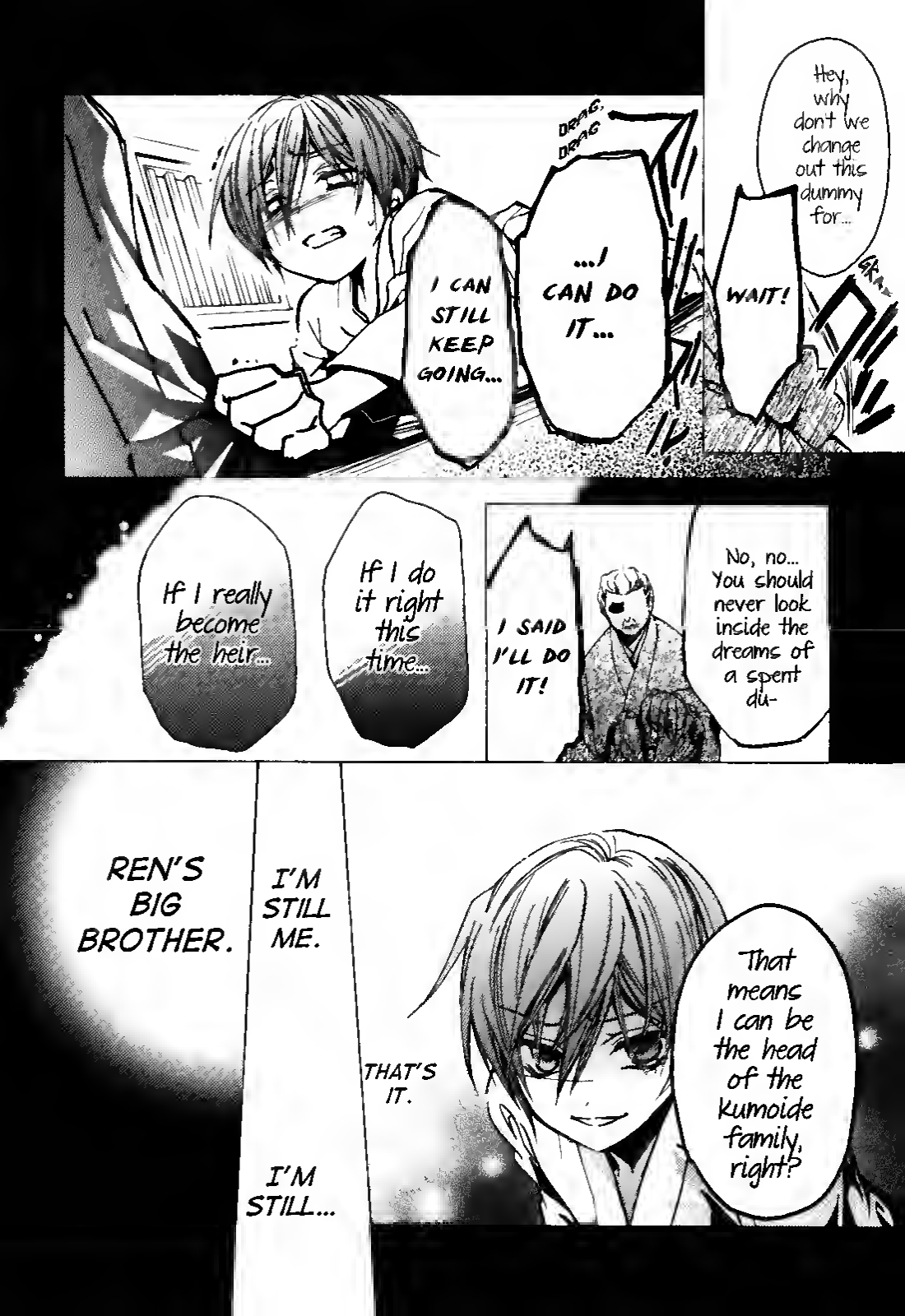
You're hurting me...
Mom... What's a-matter?
FORGIVE ME FOR THINKING THIS WAY.
I'm so glad... it wasn't you...!
Ren...
Listen to me...
No matter what happens, I want you to stand by Cain,
...This is...
Wait... That's me... when I was a kid?
What the...

This is a "dream" of the memories in your heart.
...My memories? What the hell does that mean?
That side is, at least.
...Damn it.
SIGH
Hiyoki.
Leave it to you to pull a stunt like this...
IS CAIN'S
AND THE "OTHER" SIDE...

WAAAAH
AM I... ME RIGHT NOW...?
Keep that up, and you could be devoured by the chaos inside one's mind
You're delving all the way into the deepest recesses of a persons dream.. Quite reckless of you, Cain
AM I STILL HUMAN?
Oh dear.
AGH
NGH!
You haven't mastered control over your powers yet, have you...
HUKGH!
BLUGH!

AM I...
See...?
LOOK-ING INTO THEM?
That dummy's already been spent.
How many does that make now, I wonder...?
SLIDE...
OR ARE THEY LOOKING INTO ME?
"Dreams" are what make up the core of a person.
The trick is to use a gentle touch... Otherwise, you'll break their mind.
...Ah!
I don't want to do this any-more!
LUNGE
HAVE I BROKEN THEM?
Some-body!
Help me...!
OR HAVE THEY BROKEN ME?
Tie him down if he struggles.

I CAN'T
The worst is only yet to come...
We're out of dummies...
Hey...
How many times does this make? Maybe we should douse him with water...
Ah...
There's no point to having those two in the detached house around anymore, is there...?
Come to think of it...
The woman's lungs are shot,
but the boy..


Hey, why don't we change out this dummy for...
DRAG, DRAG
WAIT!
...I CAN DO IT...
I CAN STILL KEEP GOING...
No, no... You should never look inside the dreams of a spent du-
I SAID I'LL DO IT!
If I do it right this time...
If I really become the heir...
That means I can be the head of the Kumoide family, right?
THAT'S IT.
I'M STILL ME.
I'M STILL...
REN'S BIG BROTHER.

I hereby order as the next head of the Kumoide family...
GOOD BYE,
The mistress and her son are henceforth exiled from this house.
MY ONE AND ONLY FAMILY.

FADE
...What the hell...
...did I... just see...?
Those were Cain's memories.
.....
Or a dream of them, at least...
I connected your dream with his.
...Hiyoki?

THERE'S SOME-THING EVEN BIGGER THAT I CAN MAKE HAPPEN.
Cain!!
droop
You need to get to the hearing!
It should have started an hour ago.
.....
I doubt anyone's even...

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN SO AFRAID...
...OF OTHER PEOPLE FINDING OUT ABOUT MY POWERS...
I'm sorry...
For using such a weird ability on you without asking...
...And for keeping it a secret up until now.
BUT RIGHT NOW,

Don't give up now!!
Everyone wants to hear what you REALLY have to say...!!
Ren-kun...
Everyone at school...
IF YOU CAN HEAR THE VOICES INSIDE PEOPLES' HEARTS,
THEN I KNOW WITH-OUT A DOUBT
THAT YOU CAN HEAR THE VOICES OF THE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN YOU, TOO.

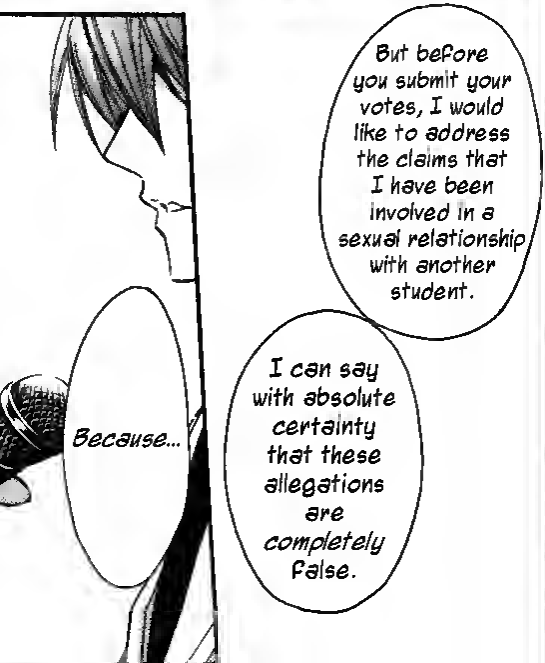
Slam
And I want to know, too!
Tell us once and for all what's real about you!
REACH OUT TO THE LIGHT.
MAYBE SHE'S RIGHT.
WHEN I WAS YOUNGER,
MAYBE THEN I COULD STILL HEAR THEIR VOICES.

Slam
THE TRUE VOICES
OF THE PEOPLE.
Cain-sama...!!
MURMUR
MURMUR
Looks like someone's running a little late...

...What's going on here?
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
Oh, nothing.
Just fulfilling some obligations as the previous president.
But that's all a bunch of boring talk. You get up there and break a leg.
I figured I'd give the student body a run-down of some of your more merited achievements as the president of the student council.
Ninomiya Kitoh...!?
GLARE

...was that you, Kumoide, were my ideal vision of what a president should be.
Even after I stopped being the student council president, the one thing I could be proud of...
PHEW
Clack
Now get up there and settle this once and for all.
My name is Kumoide Cain.
I can make no suitable excuse for my tardiness.

MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
Today, your voices will count towards whether or not you feel that I am still suitable to serve as your president,
and, as every other president before me who has faced a similar situation, whether or not this measure of no-confidence against my abilities passes or not,
I have every intention of leaving the final decision in the capable hands of you, my fellow members of the student body


But before you submit your votes, I would like to address the claims that I have been involved in a sexual relationship with another student.
I can say with absolute certainty that these allegations are completely false.
Because...

I know I've caused a lot of turmoil within our prestigious institution and caused many of you to worry for my well-being.
With the inclusion of certain rumors,
However,
And for that, I can honestly say I'm sorry.

My feelings for her are still very much one-sided.

That is all!!
Woohooo!
TMI!
Yaaay!
He WHAT?!
Well, damn!
That guy...

You think so too, huh?
Y...
He's kind of changed...
B-BM
B-BM
B-BM
CAIN'S IDEA OF A STUPID JOKE!?
OR WAS IT...
W... WAS THAT
B-BM
B-BM
REN-KUN!!
It never had anything to do with him.
it was because she was ill.
That when Mom died...
...I always knew, though.

But...
I was so caught up in my belief that he'd betrayed us...
That I couldn't bring myself to just let it go...
I was the only one left in the dark about the whole damn thing,
and I was the only one who got to take the easy way out!
SLAM
Why couldn't anyone...
WHY DIDN'T I...
Why couldn't anyone have told me what was going on?
WHY DIDN'T I EVER TRY TO FIND OUT FOR MYSELF?

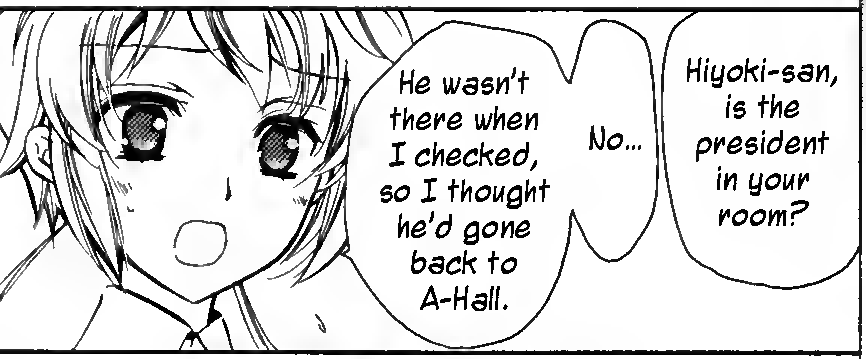
Because...
Pat
They didn't say anything because they care about you, Ren-kun.
...Mh...!
EVEN THEIR EMBARRASSED FACES KIND OF LOOK ALIKE.

Hiyoki... Listen! I...!
Yes?
Then again...
MUTTER
Nah. It wouldn't be fair right now...
Thanks!!
Uu

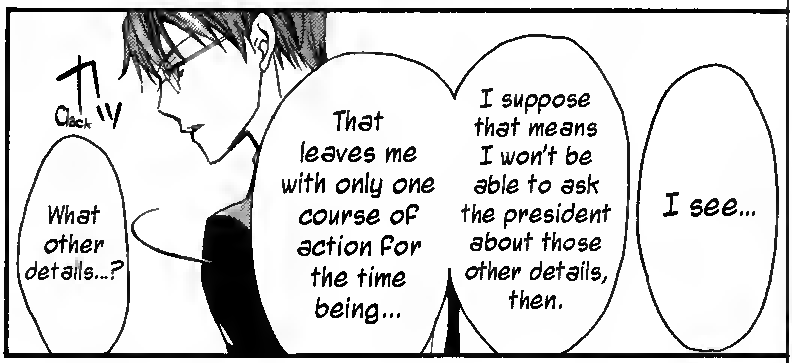
Woo, Yeah
VOTING TO PASS THE MOTION OF NO-CONFIDENCE WILL NOW BEGIN.
IF YOU HAVE YOUR BALLOTS READY, PLEASE TURN THEM IN NOW. YOU MAY ALSO SUBMIT YOUR VOTES VIA THE STUDENT COUNCIL'S WEBSITE...
Wham
Ren-kun?

OH, GOOD.
I think I'd better leave it at that for now...!
Sorry...!
Shoo
REN-KUN'S BACK TO NORMAL...
AND CAIN, TOO...

What? That can't be right...
But the ballots were unanimous!
The ballots collected at the site of the hearing were all against the proposal, yes.
The vast majority of online votes were negative as well, according to the final tally...
But by Fortuna's overall calculations,
the motion of no-confidence against Kumoide Cain has been passed...
And THAT'S what I'm angry about.



THAT CAN'T BE...!


Click
What other details...?
That leaves me with only one course of action for the time being...
I suppose that means I won't be able to ask the president about those other details, then.
I see...

I SAID I WAS MAD. DIDN'T I?

I mean the strange men in black lurking around school grounds,
and what they might have to do with this rather unfair turn of events.

I'm going to hack into Fortuna using my own computer.
Granted, I may not know what's going on with the president right now,
but that won't stop me from deleting that "unjust" virus!
I'm going to go find Cain!

SHIFT
WHEREVER HE IS, I'M SURE HE'S STILL ON SCHOOL GROUNDS...
Are you leaving, Hiyoki...?
KUGA-KUN...
Yeah...
I don't like that guy one bit...

But,
I'll always be on your side, Hiyoki.
No matter what you decide...
If this is what you want,
then go to him.
KUGA-KUN...
DASH
THE WIND IS TEPID...

WHERE ARE YOU?
ARE YOU SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, SUFFERING ALL BY YOURSELF LIKE YOU USED TO?
IT'S LIKE THE ENTIRE CAMPUS IS ON PINS AND NEEDLES...
IT FEELS SO STRANGE.
B-BAM!
B-BAM!
B-BAM!
CAIN...

DOES IT HURT... "KUMOIDE CAIN"?
...you...
...who called me here, right...?
You're the one...
THERE'S A WAY YOU CAN ESCAPE THAT PAIN...
BUT IN ORDER TO DO SO, YOU MUST FIRST OBTAIN A CERTAIN SOME-THING...
FWOOSH
CRUSH
SHIP
SLIP

S.L.H. - STRAY LOVE HEARTS!

TRANSLATION NOTES FOR CH. 19

I BASTARDIZE OTHER LANGUAGES BECAUSE MINE IS SUPERIOR.

Stella sisms! Part XXL (p. 97)

Oh hey Stella! Long time no~ OH GODDAMMIT STELLA YOU RE DOING THAT THING AGAIN...AREN'T YOU Well I'll gives me a chance to bastardize the French language one last time (... one of the only things I will miss about SLH) so I'm cool with that shiiit.

Originally instead of "Très mal" Stella says, in English mind you "So bad"

And I'm pretty confidant nothing was lost in translation

FSHHH...
A SPECIAL "HEART," JUST FOR YOU...
YOU... ARE THE CHOSEN ONE.

S.L.H: Stray Love Hearts! Vol. 5, ch. 18

Brought to you by Turtle Paradise Scanlations @ http://www.turtle-paradise.net
July 19th, 2011

シルフ
毎数月22日
発売♥
キュン萌え☆トキメキ乙女コミック
『S・L・Hストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ！』硝音あや

SLH
ストレイ・ラブ・ハーツ!
The Last Room

Stray Love Hearts!

bmp
ngh...
CLENCH
MY HEART HURTS SO MUCH, IT FEELS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO BREAK...
bmp
I KNOW.
bmp
I checked around school and in the shopping district. Nobody's seen him.
WHERE IS HE.
WHERE ARE YOU, CAIN
!?
He's got to be somewhere at school, right...?

INSIDE THIS FAKE HEART.
THE ANSWER'S HERE...
b-bump
THE SECRET BLACK-OUT CURTAIN...
b-bump
S-HALL...
b-bump
THE MANAGER'S... KOUSETSU-SAN'S ROOM?
b-bump
NOW GUIDE ME!
tmp
tmp
SHOW ME WHERE MY REAL HEART IS!
b-bump

CLACK
ARE YOU REALLY HERE?
You actually came.
FWIP
THERE'S A STAIRWAY LEADING TO THE UNDERGROUND RUINS FROM HERE, TOO!?
CLACK
CLACK
WAS I RIGHT?
THUMP
THUMP

clack
Hiyoki...
wobble
CAIN...!

IT FEELS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT DOWN HERE FROM LAST TIME.
Cain. Come on. We have to get out of here...
SQUEEZE
Hiyoki.
Some thing's...
!
!
Will you run away with me...?
CAIN!?

...No.
I... I don't think running away is going to help you at all right now!
IS THAT WHAT YOU REALLY WANT?
WAS THAT REALLY THE SORT OF "FREEDOM" YOU'VE BEEN SO DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR?
wobble
Cain...!
I get it.

YOU REALLY DON'T THINK I'M GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU, DO YOU...
CAIN...!?
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TAKE "IT,"
AND YOU WILL BE FREE AT LAST...
THEN YOUR POWERS WILL STABILIZE,
WHOSE VOICE IS-!?
BEGIN THE CEREMONY.
THAT TATTOO ...!!

Now,
YOUR HEART WILL BE MINE...

All you have to do is take it.
Once I have "it"... I'll be free from these powers...
I KNEW IT.
THAT DREAM I HAD
ON THE NIGHT OF MY 16TH BIRTHDAY
IF YOU WON'T BE MINE OF YOUR OWN WILL...
THEN I'LL TAKE YOU BY FORCE.
FORETOLD THIS EVENT... A DREAM OF THE FUTURE.
b-bump
b-bump
b-bump
b-bump

"THE ONE WHO WILL STEAL MY HEART..."
AND HE'S...
MY REAL HEART WAS WITH ME ALL ALONG.
I NEVER IMAGINED THAT MY HEART- THAT MY MIND ITSELF
YOU'RE...
THAT DREAM SCARED ME,
WAS CAPABLE OF HAVING SUCH AN INTENSE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO ANY-THING.
TERRIFIED ME SO MUCH,
b-bmp
b-bmp
b-bmp
b-bmp

BUT HERE WITH YOU, I'M NOT AFRAID...
BECAUSE THE PERSON I'D BEEN LOOKING FOR ALL THIS TIME...
IT WAS YOU.

THERE'S SOMETHING DISTURBING ABOUT YOU.
WE DIDN'T HAVE THE MOST PLEASANT FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF ONE OTHER,
AND IT TOOK A WHILE FOR ME TO SEE THROUGH TO YOUR KINDNESS.
YOU WERE HEAVY.
THE WAY YOU NEVER HAD ANYTHING BUT NASTY THINGS TO SAY TO ME WAS CONFUSING AT FIRST,
BUT I STILL COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO DISLIKE YOU.
AND EVENTUALLY, I SAW PAST THE COLD DEPTHS OF YOUR EYES INTO THE PASSION UNDERNEATH.
THE HEART I'D BEEN SEARCHING FOR,
AND THE TRUE YOU I'D BEEN SEEKING ALL THIS TIME...

NOW THEY'VE JOINED TOGETHER INTO MY TRUE FEELINGS,
AND I'LL GLADLY GIVE THEM TO YOU.
GLOW
...!
...Why?
CLENCH

DESPERATELY SEEKING A FREEDOM ONLY I COULD HAVE-
BUT NOW?
WHY...!?
AFTER THROWING AWAY MY BLOOD,
MY EMOTIONS,
MY FATE,
I'VE FOUGHT FOR SO LONG,
I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO SACRIFICE YOU.
EVERYTHING HOLDING ME BACK, EVERY CHAIN THAT BOUND ME AND THE CAGE THAT RESTRAINED ME...
...WHY NOW!?
AFTER FINALLY COMING TO THIS POINT,

SQUEEZE
COULD IT BE BECAUSE... I LOVE YOU...?

drop
Cai...n...?
I CAN'T BRING MYSELF...
CAIN!!
TO TAKE YOUR LIGHT AWAY.
My, oh my...
He couldn't take your "heart."

KOUSETSU-SAN!!!
What a shame. As another dream-seer like yourself,
he would have been absolutely perfect to perform the ceremony to draw out the "Key."
And I was so sure he'd take your heart if I gave him no other option, too...
Maybe it was a little too early to bring him here...
That, or perhaps I should have used a different boy entirely...
FWOO

You tricked us...
Both me AND Cain!!
Kousetsu-san... How could you!?
Ahh. Guess that means my cover's blown, eh?
...Hn
CLENCH
BUT CAIN FOUGHT AGAINST THAT FATE COMING TRUE...
You heart was never stolen to begin with.
The dream you saw on the night of your sixteenth birthday was of your fate... A dream of the future.
Well, you got me.
But such is the price to be paid for initiating the ceremony.
doomed to an eternity of wandering within an endless nightmare.

That story about me putting a "Fake Heart" inside you in its place was a lie...
But then again, it was also the truth.
Your heart was so wrought with fear of the future that it had fallen into a frozen sort of stasis, so I used a bit of my patented hypnosis to wake it up.
It was oversensitive and very fragile,
but your hypnotized heart moved in all the ways I wanted it to.
And that, my dear, is precisely why it was "FAKE."
thump
Kousetsu-san. Who ARE you ?
That part wasn't a joke.
Who, me?
As I told you before, I'm a "sorcerer."
With one minor exception

Like the Kumoide family and yourself,
I, too, have the ability to see inside other peoples' dreams... Although my powers aren't as strong as either of yours.
!!
All I'm able to do is see inside the dreams other dream-seers happen to be seeing at the time.
While I was looking around for other dream-seers, I happened to stumble upon that dream you had of the future,
and that's what made me realize...
that you, Hiyoki-kun, were SPECIAL.
Me? Special?
Your abilities as a dream-seer.

I realized your heart held an extraordinary "key."
With that key, one has the power to unlock peoples' dreams,
their very cores, and leave them exposed.
MY HEART... IS THE KEY?
Dreams are the core of a person's mind,
the place where the strength of their desire lies
Knowing that, I set out to find students whose strength of desire far exceeded the potential of ordinary people.
invited them to attend this school in much the same way I did Cain and Ren.
manipulated Fortuna to suit my needs,
and gathered them all into S-Hall.

And then there was you.
Drawn in by the emblem I designed for S-Hall,
you came to this dorm,
and went from room to room precisely as I instructed you to, never once stopping to question me.
But why would you go to all that trouble...?
You noticed the way your heart randomly beat faster and your powers got stronger, didn't you?
your key grew stronger and stronger, tempered by each incident.
Each time you looked into another boy's dream,
Well, you see, it didn't necessarily HAVE to be Cain.
Just about anyone in S-Hall could have stolen your heart with no problem whatsoever.
FATE COMES IN MANY FORMS. THIS WAS JUST ONE WAY IT PLAYED OUT.

The ceremony to steal your heart
and transform it into a literal "key" called only for...
a person who "desired" you more than anyone else,
who, at the same time,
was someone you would willingly offer your heart to.
It's like a twisted spin on a fairy tale, don't you think?
A couple of lovers offer themselves up to one another,
and a key physically materializes from their sacrificed hearts.

THAT KEY IS WHAT I WANT.
WOOM
flinch
Maybe it'll work. After all, you're still under my hypnosis.
But it seems I'm out of other options, now...
I'll just have to see if I can steal it from you myself.
KOUSETSU-SAN...!!
!!

You know, you're only wasting your time running from me.
These underground ruins are like the space between dreams and reality.
fwoosh
DASH
Once I have your Key,
I'll be able to enter the dreams of whomever I wish, whenever I wish...
MIND-CONTROL?
And once inside, I'll be able to control their minds however I like.

Besides, you're still under my hypnosis. You'll do whatever I want you to.
Then tell me the truth...!!
If you can control people with your hypnosis like you say you can.
then what do you need this key for?!
It's because you know your hypnosis can only control people on the surface - you can't control their hearts.
If you wanted the key so badly, you could have just stolen it yourself!
All you can do is trick and deceive people -
The reason you can't...

Is because you're afraid of other peoples' hearts.
FATE FROZE MY HEART TO BEGIN WITH,
BUT AS I OPENED THE DOOR TO S-HALL INCH BY INCH,
I GRADUALLY FOUND MYSELF RETURNING TO THE WAY I USED TO BE.
BECAUSE THERE, I WASN'T JUST OPENING THEIR DOORS...
THEY WERE OPENING MINE, TOO.

I WASN'T MANIPULATING THEM,
AND THEY WEREN'T MANIPULATING ME, EITHER.
Peoples' hearts open even if you don't have some "Key" to unlock them!
No one needs a key to form a relationship with another person...!!
What are you...!?
shift

OVER THERE.
IT'S NOTHING BUT PURE... WHITE...
KOUSETSU-SAN'S DREAM...
THE SCENERY INSIDE HIS HEART...
PLEASE, LET ME GET THROUGH TO HIM...

I HEAR THE VOICE OF SOMEONE... IN DESPAIR.
How dare you pretend to understand me!
How dare you...
IS THIS WHY HE NEEDED THE KEY...?

NOW I WILL TAKE YOUR HEART!
OH NO...
GLOW
I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET MY GUARD DOWN!
SHINK
SHINK

CAIN...!
How are you awake...!?
Sorry. I'm used to nightmares by now.

THIS IS WHAT YOU GET FOR TANGLING WITH THE HEAD OF THE KUMOIDE FAMILY!!
NOW YOU TRY STAYING IN THE DARKNESS FOR A WHILE...!!

fwoom
We're out...
Kou-setsu-san...
He won't be waking up anytime soon. That's what he gets for meddling with dreams.
But if he's a dream-seer like us, he won't stay trapped inside his mind forever.

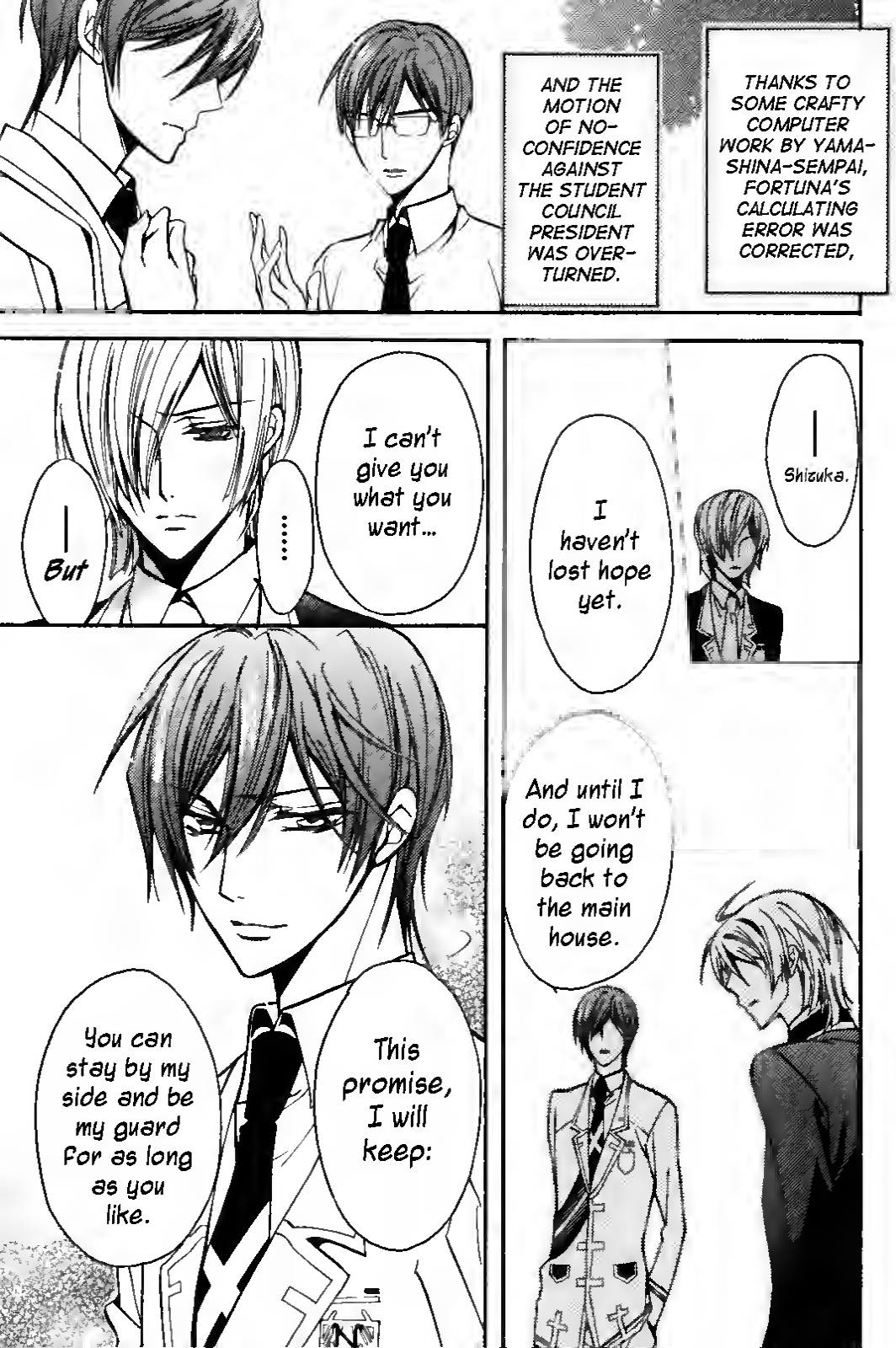
Now let's get out of here.

It's just past dawn...
We must have been trapped down there all night.
I need you.
...Hiyoki.
RUSTLE...
All I can say right now is...
..Wait.
That's not it... Hold on. I'm not good at saying these things...

I LOVE YOU.

ALL I NEED ARE SWEET DREAMS,
I DON'T NEED ANY "KEY,"
AND I DON'T NEED "FATE," EITHER.
JUST A FEW LITTLE WORDS,
AND TO FEEL YOU HERE WITH ME.
...CAIN, I...

HEEEY!!
AND SO THE NIGHT WHICH SEEMED TO LAST FOREVER, YET PASSED IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE CAME TO AN END.


AND THE MOTION OF NO-CONFIDENCE AGAINST THE STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT WAS OVER-TURNED.
THANKS TO SOME CRAFTY COMPUTER WORK BY YAMA-SHINA-SEMPAI, FORTUNA'S CALCULATING ERROR WAS CORRECTED,
I can't give you what you want...
.....
But
Shizuka.
I haven't lost hope yet.
And until I do, I won't be going back to the main house.
This promise, I will keep:
You can stay by my side and be my guard for as long as you like.

AND SO, KUMOIDE CAIN RETURNED TO A-HALL.
IT'S BEEN ONE MONTH SINCE THEN.
REN-KUN ENDED UP GETTING A FEW MORE PART-TIME JOBS,
THE ROOM CAIN STAYED IN WAS PASSED ON TO ME, AND I BECAME AN OFFICIAL MEMBER OF S-HALL.

AS FOR KUGA-KUN,
(HE AND HIS BROTHER STILL AREN'T GETTING ALONG, THOUGH...)
BUT HE WAS ABLE TO STAY IN SCHOOL BY USING HIS EARNINGS TO PAY OFF HIS OWN TUITION.
HE DECIDED TO FORM A LIGHT MUSIC CLUB,
AND HE MANAGED TO GET REN-KUN TO JOIN, TOO.
HE AND ASUKAI-SEMPAI SPENT THEIR TIME REMODELING THE UNDER-GROUND RUINS.
UNTIL THE DAY HE GRAD-UATED,
KITOH-SEMPAI NEVER DID GO STUDY ABROAD.

GAI-SEMPAI'S ALWAYS SLEEPING SOMEWHERE OR OTHER.
THE STUDENT COUNCIL'S JUST AS POPULAR AS THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN,
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, YAMASHINA-SEMPAI'S GETTING HIS SHARE OF THE ATTENTION, TOO.
AS FOR KOU-SETSU-SAN...
HE STAYED ASLEEP FOR A WHILE,
BUT ONE NIGHT, HE UP AND DISAPPEARED, LEAVING ONLY THE FAINTEST TRACES OF HIS WAKENING BEHIND.
LILA-SAN, KOUSETSU-SAN'S ASSISTANT TOLD ME LATER...
You needn't worry about Master.

AND AS FOR ME,
I MUST HAVE USED TOO MUCH OF MY POWER WHEN I LOOKED INSIDE KOUSETSU'S DREAM,
BECAUSE EVER SINCE THEN, I'VE RARELY, IF EVER, SET FOOT INSIDE ANOTHER PERSON'S DREAM AGAIN.
THEN AGAIN, MAYBE THERE'S STILL SOME-THING I'M GOOD FOR.

He may not be very understanding or know when to quit,

but he's not such a bad person, once you get past all that.

BECAUSE WHENEVER CAIN TAKES HIS AFTERNOON NAPS, I'M ALWAYS THERE TO WATCH OVER HIM.
AND FOR NOW, THAT'S ALL...

Fin

I'm glad the story safely came to an end. Some parts were harder to do than others, and some were more painful to do than others, but in the end, I'm glad I was able to write S.L.H.

Special Thanx
Norie Nakamura Yoshise
MaedaRica Konae Honma
Tsuyako Akari Hiyo Kou Family
Sylph
and
You♥

Thanks for everything!

See you again soon!

(http://www.kashi.jpn.org/w/)

S.L.H - Stray Love-Hearts! Vol. 5, ch. 20 [END]

Brought to you by Turtle Paradise Scanlations @ http://www.turtle-paradise.net
July 22nd 2011

THE END!
We hope you enjoyed the series as much as this turtle did
(Hee hee.)
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